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**THE BOARD OF REGISTRATION OF PHYSICIAN
ASSISTANTS**
**ADVISORY ON PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION OF
DEATH CERTIFICATES**

Recently, the Legislature passed an amendment to the law controlling the issuance of death certificates. Effective July 1, 2016, Chapter 133 § 48 of the Acts of 2016 amended M.G.L.c. 46 § 9. This change in state law authorizes physician assistants to sign death certificates.

The Registry of Vital Records and Statistics collects, processes, corrects and issues copies of vital records (birth, death, and marriage) that occur in Massachusetts. The Registry manages death certificates using the VIP Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS). **The Board of Registration of Physician Assistants strongly encourages all physician assistants to enroll in the VIP on-line.** Physician Assistants who will be using the VIP system to certify deaths must follow the medical certifiers guide to enroll. If you already have an account with the Virtual Gateway for another application such as the new Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) you should make note of it on your enrollment forms so that your accounts can be linked to your existing user name and password.

For more information on the VIP electronic death registration system (EDRS), follow this link: <http://mass.gov/dph/edrs>. Select "[Medical Certifiers](#)" for information about enrollment and about using the system. The Registry uses the term "Medical Certifiers" in reference to medical providers who are authorized to sign death certificates, including physician assistants

The Board expects physician assistants to follow the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance on Completing the Cause-of-Death Section of the Death Certificate at:

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/misc/hb_cod.pdf
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/blue_form.pdf